

## **CT DDS Employment First Initiative. Real Work for Real Pay**

*This timeline is adapted From the Wisconsin Guide "Opening Doors to Employment". It outlines important steps to help you build a foundation for employment during your school years.*

### **Transition to Employment: Timeline for Planning K-12**

#### **Awareness of Employment (Grades K-5)**

- Discuss what work is and what jobs you know about.
- Participate in opportunities to learn about careers / jobs
- Take part in household chores (e.g., sorting laundry, setting the table, cleaning your room.)
- Participate in choice making about things at home (e.g., what to wear to school) and at school
- Learn basic academic skills (e.g., reading, math, and writing)
- Begin to develop soft skills
- Explore / Develop social opportunities

#### **Explore Employment Options (Grades 6-8)**

- Explore school jobs (e.g., office monitor, mail attendant, library worker)
- Volunteer in the community (e.g. neighborhood groups, religious groups).
- Take part in neighborhood jobs (e.g. mowing the lawn, shoveling snow)
- Job shadow (observe employment environments and tasks) with parents/family/friends.
- Learn about a variety of careers through Career Center/Library/Internet to find job/career options.
- Talk to adults about what they do for work.
- Identify your interests and skills. Start a portfolio of any jobs and volunteer work as well as references.
- Build on your academic skills (include writing and other communication skills).
- Begin to develop self-advocacy skills and understand your needed accommodations/modifications.
- Continue to develop soft skills related to job success
- Continue to develop social opportunities
- Share hopes and dreams for the future (e.g., what types of jobs you like).
- Explore websites related to work like <http://www.connect-ability.com/>

#### **Planning and Preparing for Employment (Grades 9-10)**

- Begin your IEP transition planning process by age 15 and discuss future employment goals
- Continue taking academic courses needed for graduation
- Practice completing job applications (online and on paper).
- Identify people that will help you with your career goal.
- Seek out options take classes that relate to career or job choices
- Make copies of work-related documents (social security card, birth certificate, CT I.D.).
- Complete work experiences / volunteer work based on interests.
- Participate in any career exploration/preparation classes offered by your high school.
- Learn about resources and make connections with community agencies.
- Complete interest inventories and self-directed searches at the high school or on the Internet.
- Begin and update a career portfolio (include updated resume, job applications, letters of reference, career research findings, mock or practice interview results).

#### **Exploring Employment/Career Options (Grades 11-12 and Post-Grad)**

- Reexamine your needs, preferences, interests with regard to careers based on your work experiences.
- Learn about training requirements in your career area of interest.
- Research Labor Market and utilize CT WORKS
- Continue taking academic courses needed for graduation
- Develop transportation strategies (e.g. driver's license, independent travel skills training)
- Continue volunteer work based on interests.
- Participate in school to work program with your high school (e.g., apprenticeship, work study)
- Participate in paid work experiences in the community (ask each employer for a letter of reference describing your skills and attitude on the job).
- Find summer employment opportunities.
- Continue to revise your career portfolio.
- Learn about resources and make connections with community agencies.
- Continue to develop self-advocacy skills
- Continue to develop soft skills and social opportunities